The Empty Tomb: Teacher's Guide v1.2

14 November 2026 · Written for The Empty Tomb v1.1

At a glance

The Empty Tomb is a projected, first-person investigation in which the class tests four explanations for the empty tomb and rules them out one by one. It follows Billy and the Ants, picking up where that game ends: "On the third day he rose again from the dead."

Class	Form 2 Peter, Week 32: Jesus is the Son of God
File	The_Empty_Tomb_v1.1.html, in the Week 32 folder
Time	About 10 minutes for two explanations; about 20 minutes for all four
You need	A laptop, a projector and a mouse. No internet and no sound
Players	One volunteer at the laptop as the investigator; the rest of the class directs and votes

The game shows no questions for the class on screen. Every question is in this guide, marked **Ask**.

The timings in this guide are estimates and have not been tested with a class.

Before class

Play the game through once on the classroom laptop so you know where each clue is.

☐ Copy The_Empty_Tomb_v1.1.html to the laptop and open it by double-clicking

☐ Click **Full screen** at the top right once the projector is connected

☐ Check the text under the picture can be read from the back row

☐ Show the volunteer how to look around with the mouse before starting

☐ Decide how many explanations you have time for: two is the minimum, four is the full case

☐ Decide which two to start with if time is short (A and C are the quickest to explain)

☐ Have a Bible ready if you want a student to read a passage aloud

☐ Decide how the class will vote in the locked room: hands, or moving to a side of the room

Where it fits in the lesson

Play it after Billy and the Ants and after slide 16 (the Apostles' Creed).

1. Billy and the Ants ends on the Creed line about the Resurrection.
2. Slide 16 shows the Creed in full. Point to "on the third day he rose again from the dead".
3. Say something like: "How do we know? Let us investigate." Then switch to this game.
4. Finish on slide 17.

Week 32 is now a full lesson: 17 slides and two games. If time runs short, play only two explanations here, or keep this game for the following week.

How the game works

The class sees everything through the investigator's eyes. Moving the mouse turns your head: push it to the left edge of the picture to look left, to the top to look up. Each picture is larger than the screen, so some clues are out of view until you look for them. If the mouse is left still, the view drifts slowly on its own.

- **Pulsing rings** with a label mark the things to click. A ring stops pulsing once it has been looked at.
- Clicking a ring makes you **turn towards the clue and lean in** for about three seconds, then the view pulls back by itself.
- Moving to a new place fades through black as if you are walking forward.
- **The case notebook** on the right lists the four explanations. Click one to go and test it.
- Each explanation has **two clues**. When both are found, a **Give your verdict** button appears.
- After the verdict the explanation is stamped **Ruled out** and crossed off in the notebook.
- The last line of the notebook, **E**, unlocks once two explanations are ruled out.

Screen by screen

1. The briefing

On screen: Pilate hands you an order. The tomb of Jesus is open and the body is gone.

Do: Choose a volunteer to be the investigator. Read the text aloud, then click Go to the tomb.

Say: Explain that the class is playing a Roman officer who does not believe anything yet. Their job is to find out what happened.

2. The tomb

On screen: The mouth of the tomb, the stone rolled aside, and the notebook with four explanations.

Do: Let the volunteer click The stone and Look inside. Look inside opens a separate picture of the burial cloths on the shelf (John 20:5-7); click Step back outside to return. Then ask the class which explanation to test first.

Ask: The tomb is empty. What could have happened to the body?

Listen for: The class will often suggest the four explanations themselves before reading them. Let them.

3. Explanation A: the disciples stole the body

Clue	What it shows	Passage
The seal on the rock	The tomb was sealed and guarded because the leaders feared a theft	Matthew 27:62-66
The pouch in his hand	The guards were paid to say the disciples took him while they slept	Matthew 28:11-15

Ask (before the verdict): If the guards were asleep, how would they know who took the body?

Listen for: They could not know. The story does not hold together.

Verdict on screen: A sleeping guard cannot say who came. The disciples were hiding behind locked doors (John 20:19).

4. Explanation B: they went to the wrong tomb

Clue	What it shows	Passage
The women who watched	Mary Magdalene and the other Mary saw where he was laid	Mark 15:47; Luke 23:55
Whose tomb is this?	It belonged to Joseph of Arimathea, a well-known council member	Mark 15:42-46

Ask (before the verdict): If they had gone to the wrong tomb, what could the leaders have done to end the story?

Listen for: Open the right tomb and show the body.

Verdict on screen: Everyone knew which tomb it was. A mistake would have been corrected within the hour.

5. Explanation C: he never really died

Clue	What it shows	Passage
The spear	The soldiers found him already dead, and one pierced his side	John 19:33-34
The report to Pilate	Pilate confirmed the death with the centurion before releasing the body	Mark 15:44-45

Ask (before the verdict): Who were the experts on whether a crucified man was dead?

Listen for: The Roman soldiers. It was their job.

Verdict on screen: Roman soldiers knew when a man was dead. His death was confirmed twice.

6. Explanation D: the witnesses imagined it

Clue	What it shows	Passage
How many saw him?	Peter, the Twelve, more than five hundred at one time, James, and Paul	1 Corinthians 15:5-8
The meal on the table	They touched him, and he ate a piece of fish in front of them	Luke 24:36-43

Ask (before the verdict): Can five hundred people imagine the same thing at the same moment?

Listen for: No. And something imagined cannot be touched and does not eat.

Verdict on screen: One person might imagine it. Five hundred do not.

7. The locked room

On screen: The view changes to a lamp-lit room with a barred door. The class now sees through the eyes of Thomas, who was not there when Jesus first appeared. Two disciples say, "We have seen the Lord!"

Do: Tell the class they are now Thomas. Take a vote on the three choices, and have the volunteer click the winner.

Choice	What the game answers
Their word is enough	In the Gospel, Thomas did not take their word
I need to see for myself	That is what Thomas said
Nothing would convince me	Thomas was not that closed; he said what he needed

All three choices lead to the same next screen.

8. Eight days later

On screen: The screen goes black with one line of text. Then two hands with healed scars fade in slowly, held out towards the class, and Thomas's answer appears: "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:26-28). The Close the case button appears only after about 17 seconds.

Do: Say nothing while the hands fade in. Read the text slowly once it appears, and ask the question before anyone clicks.

Ask: Thomas asked for proof, and Jesus came to him. What does that tell us about how Jesus treats someone who doubts?

Listen for: He did not reject Thomas or scold him away. He met him where he was.

9. Case closed

On screen: Your own hands holding a wax tablet. The explanations that were tested are crossed out on the left page; any that were not are marked "not tested". "He is risen." is written on the right page. After about seven seconds the closing words and a Play again button appear.

Do: Read the closing words of Jesus aloud: "Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed" (John 20:29).

Ask: We were not there either. Who is Jesus talking about in that sentence?

Listen for: Us.

What the investigation shows, and what it does not

The investigation shows that the other explanations fail. It does not prove the Resurrection the way a sum is proved, and it is worth saying so to the class.

- **What the evidence does:** it removes the easy ways out. The tomb was guarded, the right tomb was known, the death was certain, and the witnesses were many.

- **What still takes faith:** believing that he rose. This is why the game ends with Thomas and not with the notebook. The evidence brings Thomas to the door; meeting Jesus brings him through it.
- **If a student is not convinced:** that is an honest place to be, and Thomas was there too. Do not press for agreement.

Three parts of the game are not in Scripture and were added to make it playable: the Roman officer, the line that a mistaken tomb "would have been corrected within the hour", and the idea of the soldier still holding the pouch of money.

Every passage in this guide was checked against online Bible text on 13 and 14 November 2026. The clue wording on screen is a paraphrase, not a quotation from any one translation.

Controls and troubleshooting

If this happens	Do this
The picture is small with black bars	Click Full screen at the top right
No Give your verdict button	One clue has not been clicked yet; look for the ring that is still pulsing
The view is stuck zoomed in	Wait three seconds; it pulls back by itself
A clue cannot be found	Move the mouse to the edges of the picture to look around; in the centurion's room the spear is far to the left
No button on the hands screen	Wait. The button appears after about 17 seconds
E is still locked	Rule out two explanations first
The class wants to test an explanation again	Ruled-out explanations cannot be reopened; click Restart at the top right
The file will not open	Right-click it and choose Open with, then pick Chrome, Edge or Safari